REMARKS

The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed April 11, 2005. Claims 2, 3 and 9-11 have been amended without adding new matter. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested for the following reasons.

Claims 3 and 9 – 11 are objected to due to informalities. Applicants thank the Examiner for the careful reading of the application. Claims 3 and 9 – 11 have been amended as suggested by the Office Action.

Claims 2 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants again thank the Examiner for the careful reading of the claims. Claims 2 and 3 have been amended in accordance with the interpretation adopted by the Office Action in examining claims 2 and 3, as outlined at the bottom of page 4 of the Office Action. All of the claims are now in full compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Claims 1, 2 and 4 – 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Lee et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,160,913 ("Lee"). Reconsideration is respectfully requested for the following reasons.

The claimed invention and Lee relate to very different aspects of image processing. An object of the present invention is to eliminate a back side image without undesirably eliminating a low-intensity halftone image on the front side as explained in the specification. The specification teaches that an "object of the present invention is to reproduce a picture image without eliminating a low-intensity halftone image." Specification, p. 6, ll. 15-17. In the present invention, for example, the first image is eliminated as being a backside image when the first image data does not correspond to a halftone image on the front side. This means that a halftone image is not eliminated while eliminating a backside image.

To the contrary, the object of Lee is to eliminate halftone data during binarization according to an adaptive threshold, so as to improve a compression rate. According to Lee, "[o]nce the halftone pixels in a document image are labeled as represented in the halftone line map on output 18 of FIG. 1, halftone pixel removal process 20 of FIG. 1 is started and strictly applied to the halftone pixels only." Col. 8, ll. 36-41. Thus, the object of Lee is very different from the object of the present invention, and Lee discloses a completely different structure and technique from the present invention.

Claim 1 recites an image data correcting device comprising a "detecting means for detecting an intensity difference between first image data ... and second image data ...; [and] determining means for determining whether the first image data corresponds to a halftone image." Claim 1 further recites "intensity changing means for changing an intensity of the first image data to a predetermined low intensity, when ... the first image data does not correspond to the halftone image ... ."

Thus, the invention recited in claim 1 does not eliminate the halftone image but rather compares image data with the halftone image. Lee, on the other hand, requires elimination of the halftone image, and thus, fails to teach or suggest the above-quoted limitations of claim 1. For at least this reason, claim 1 distinguishes over Lee. Claims 2 and 4-6 depend from claim 1 and contain every limitation of claim 1. Claims 2 and 4-6 should be allowed together with their base claim.

In addition, the Office Action asserts that "a predetermined low intensity," as recited in claim 1, corresponds to "(BLACK) (column 6, lines 14-21 of Lee)." Office Action, page 5, paragraph 10. To the contrary, according to the present invention, it is clear that the limitation "a predetermined low intensity" is WHITE or the like, having a low intensity or concentration. For example, the specification discloses that the "back projection image can be eliminated by changing data corresponding to the back projection image to a low intensity value corresponding to a background level (white)." Specification, p. 5, ll. 3-6. This is opposite to "BLACK." In the present invention, for

example, the first image is eliminated as being a backside image when the first image data does not correspond to a halftone image on the front side. This means that a halftone image is not eliminated while eliminating a backside image. This is another reason why Lee, as characterized by the Office Action, fails to anticipate claim 1 and claims 2 and 4-6 dependent therefrom.

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Lee in view of Stoffel, U.S. Patent No. 4,194,221 ("Stoffel"), and claims 7-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Lee in view of Sakamoto, U.S. Patent No. 5,235,436 ("Sakamoto"). These rejections are respectfully traversed because they are predicated upon the rejection of claim 1 over Lee. As discussed above, claim 1 is allowable over Lee, and Stoffel and/or Sakamoto add nothing to Lee to remedy its deficiencies with respect to claim 1. Claims 3 and 7-9 depend from claim 1 and incorporate every limitation of claim 1, and are allowable for at least the same reasons as for allowance of claim 1.

Claims 10 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Lee in view of Hanyu, U.S. Patent No. 5,995,658 ("Hanyu"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 10 recites, inter alia, "determining means for determining whether the first image data corresponds to a halftone image; and intensity changing means for changing an intensity of the first image data to a predetermined low intensity, when ... the first image data does not correspond to the halftone image ... ." And, claim 11 recites, inter alia, "determining means for determining whether the first image data corresponds to a halftone image; and intensity changing means for changing an intensity of the first image data to a predetermined low intensity, when ... the first image data does not correspond to the halftone image ... ."

As discussed above with respect to claim 1, Lee fails to teach or suggest the above-quoted limitations of claims 10 and 11, and Hanyu adds nothing to Lee to

remedy its deficiencies with respect to the above-quoted limitations of claims 10 and 11. Thus, claims 10 and 11 are allowable over Lee and Hanyu, whether taken alone or in combination.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants believe that the pending application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is requested to withdraw the outstanding rejections and let the application pass to issue.

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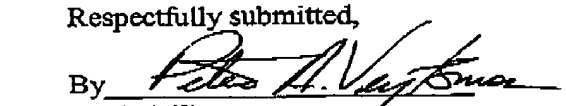
Respectfully submitted,

By 

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